

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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UNCLAS LONDON 03195

FROM AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE FOR HUME

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ECON

SUBJECT: POINTS FROM QUEEN'S SPEECH AFFECTING AGRICULTURE

START SUMMARY. THE QUEEN'S SPEECH OPENING THE NEW UK
PARLIAMENT ON MARCH 12 REFERRED TO RENEGOTIATIONS OF
TERMS OF BRITISH ENTRY INTO THE EC AND TO FOOD SUBSIDIES.
END SUMMARY.

1. AS FORESHADOWED IN THE LABOUR PARTY ELECTION
MANIFESTO, THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON MARCH 12, 1974 OPENING
THE NEW PARLIAMENT, REFERRED TO RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE
TERMS OF ENTRY INTO THE EC "MY GOVERNMENT WILL SEEK A
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FUNDAMENTAL RENEGOTIATION OF THE TERMS OF ENTRY TO THE

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. AFTER THESE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED THE RESULTS WILL BE PUT TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE."

2. ON FOOD PRICES AND SUBSIDIES THE SPEECH SAID, "MEASURES WILL BE LAID BEFORE YOU TO ESTABLISH FAIR PRICES FOR CERTAIN KEY FOODS, WITH THE USE OF SUBSIDIES WHERE APPROPRIATE; AND TO RESTRAIN PRICE INFLATION."

3. ON AGRICULTURE IN GENERAL THE SPEECH SAYS, "MY GOVERNMENT WILL ENCOURAGE THE MAXIMUM ECONOMIC PRODUCTION OF FOOD BY THE FARMING AND FISHING INDUSTRIES OF THE UK IN THE INTERESTS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMY."

4. COMMENT. THE SPEECH WAS MILD IN TONE BUT THIS MILDNESS DERIVES IN LARGE PART FROM THE VAGUENESS OF ITS WORDING. LITTLE CLARIFICATION APPEARED DURING THE FIRST DAY'S DEBATE ON THE SPEECH. THE PRIME MINISTER REFUSED TO BE DRAWN INTO GIVING DETAILS ON WHAT THE RENEGOTIATION WOULD INVOLVE AND ON HOW QUICKLY THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTED TO PROCEED. "WE SHALL ENTER INTO FUNDAMENTAL RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE TERMS OF ENTRY
... WHEN THE RENEGOTIATIONS ARE COMPLETED, HOWEVER THEY HAVE GONE AND WHATEVER THEIR OUTCOME, THE QUESTION OF BRITAIN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY WILL BE PUT TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE AND THEIR DECISION WILL BE FINAL."
MR. WILSON AT LEAST, IN RESPONSE TO CONSERVATIVE SHOUTS OF "HOW?" WENT AS FAR AS TO SAY "ALMOST CERTAINLY IN A REFERENDUM" BUT THEN SAID, "I CAN CONCEIVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE AN ELECTION."

5. MR. HEATH COMPLAINED THAT THE SPEECH HAD BEEN DRAFTED "IN SUCH A CONVOLUTED FASHION THAT IT REQUIRED PERSISTENT PROBING TO ASCERTAIN WHAT LAY BEHIND SO MUCH OF THE WORDING."

6. ON THE RENEGOTIATIONS QUESTION, MR. HEATH SAID, "MR. WILSON SHOULD CLARIFY WHAT HE INTENDED TO DO AS HE WAS IN A MINORITY IN THE HOUSE. IT WOULD BE EASY TO ABANDON MANY OF THE PLEDGES IN THIS RESPECT. THE
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GOVERNMENT WOULD BE UNABLE TO IMPORT CHEAP NEW ZEALAND FOOD BECAUSE THEY WOULD DISCOVER THERE WAS NO CHEAP NEW ZEALAND FOOD. COMMONWEALTH CEREALS WERE NOW MORE EXPENSIVE THAN THOSE FROM THE EEC. ANOTHER PROBLEM WAS TO PERSUADE THE COMMONWEALTH TO SEND FOOD HERE AT ALL. RENEGOTIATIONS OF THE TERMS WOULD BE BETTER DONE FROM WITHIN THE EEC THAN FROM WITHOUT.IF THE ISSUE WAS TO BE PUT AT A GENERAL ELECTION, THE AFTERMATH

WOULD BE THAT THE HOUSE WOULD REASSEMBLE WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF VIEWS BEING HELD AND IN THIS RESPECT IT WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT FROM WHEN THE LAST VOTE WAS TAKEN. ALTERNATIVELY, THERE WOULD BE A CONSULTATIVE REFERENDUM WHICH WOULD BE IN NO WAY BINDING ON THE HOUSE."

7. MORE CLARIFICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS ON RE-NEGOTIATION MAY EMERGE DURING THE REMAINING DAYS OF THE DEBATE ON THE SPEECH. SOHM

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